IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 23 as follows:

Figure 3 is a photographic representation showing interaction of SOCS-1 with endogenous elongins B and C. ~~Celluar~~Cellular extracts from M1 cells stably expressing either full-length SOCS-1 or SOCS-1 lacking SOCS box (both proteins were N-terminally FLAG-tagged) were incubated with anti-FLAG antibody M2 resin and bound cellular proteins were eluted from the columus with FLAG peptide as described in Materials and Methods. Lanes 1-3 correspond to column eluates 3 to 5 from M1 cells expressing full-length SOCS-1 and lanes 4-6 correspond to column eluates 3 to 5 from M1 cells expressing SOCS-1 lacking SOCS box. The panels from top to bottom correspond to Western blot analyses by anti-FLAG, anti-elongin C, anti-elongin B, and a mixture of anti-elongin B and anti-elongin C, respectively.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 28, line 7 as follows:

Figure 5 is a photographic representation of the effect of LLnL on the endogenous expression of SOCS-3 protein. The murine macrophage-like J774 cells (4×10^7) were treated with either DMSO (0.1% w/v)or LLnL (50 μM) for 15 min and then stimulated with 100 ng/ml of murine IL-6 for the indicated times in the presence of DMSO or LLnL during stimulation. The cellular extracts were immunoprecipitated with a rabbit-anti-~~SCOS~~SOCS-3 polyclonal antiserum and immune complexes eluted from protein G-Sepharose beads were resolved by SDS-PAGE (13% w/v) under reducing conditions and analysed by Western blot using biotinylated rabbit-anti-SOCS-3.